



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
Washington, DC 20423

Office of Environmental Analysis

May 22, 2013

sent via email
Don.Arnold@ehp.qld.gov.au

Don Arnold
Department of Environment and Heritage Protection
Queensland Government
136 Goondoon Street
PO Box 5065
Gladstone QLD 4680
Australia

Re: Request for Data on Coal Dust from the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection/Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts (DEHP/DSITIA) study, *Tennyson Dust Monitoring Investigation*, issued December 2012

Dear Mr. Arnold:

I am the Director of the Office of Environmental Analysis for a federal agency in the United States, the Surface Transportation Board. One of the Board's responsibilities is to license the construction and operation of new freight rail lines. Before deciding whether to approve the construction and operation of a new rail line, the Board must conduct an extensive environmental analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act.

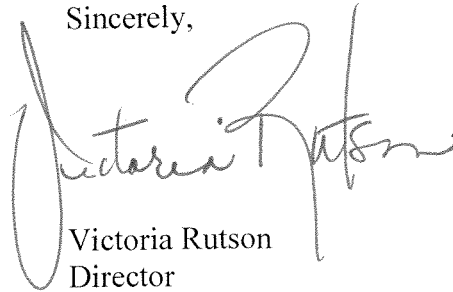
We are currently in the early stages of preparing an environmental review of a proposed freight rail construction and operation in Montana. The purpose of the new rail line would be to transport low sulfur, sub-bituminous coal from Montana and then on to both foreign and domestic markets.

Stakeholders in the Pacific Northwest States of Washington and Oregon have expressed concern that this coal, as well as coal from mines in Wyoming, would travel through many communities en route to several Coal Terminal Ports that may be built in their states. These stakeholders have suggested that increased coal train traffic may result in the emission of coal dust in quantities substantial enough to adversely affect human health and the environment.

We have searched for scientific research regarding the emission of coal dust from moving trains, but have found limited existing information. Consequently, we were pleased to discover the DEHP/DSITIA study, *Tennyson Dust Monitoring Investigation*, issued in December 2012. This study measured concentrations of airborne particulate matter near a rail line. We would appreciate your permission to contact the study authors to obtain further information on the study, and to access the unpublished datasets compiled during the study as discussed in the December 2012 report. In addition, we would like to access similar datasets collected by DEHP, DSITIA, or others during similar studies of particulate emissions from coal trains, such as the QR Network Coal Dust Management Plan and the 2008 report on Environmental Evaluation of Fugitive Coal Dust Emissions from Coal Trains, Goonyella, Blackwater and Moura Coal Rail Systems, and Queensland Rail Limited.

Thank you for considering our request. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at rutsonv@stb.dot.gov. If you are able to provide the permission that we request, please provide a copy of your response to Mr. Ken Blodgett of my staff at 395 E Street, SW, Washington, DC, 20423, 202-245-0305 (e-mail: BlodgettK@stb.dot.gov) and to Mr. Alan Summerville of ICF International, our independent third-party contractor, at 9300 Lee Highway, Fairfax, Virginia, 22031, 703-934-3616 (e-mail: Alan.Summerville@icfi.com). Please feel free to contact me at 202-245-0295, Mr. Blodgett, or Mr. Summerville if you have any questions or require additional information. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Victoria Rutson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "V" and a long, sweeping underline.

Victoria Rutson
Director
Office of Environmental Analysis